UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
6th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 12 October 1994
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 6th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KHAN (Pakistan)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/49/SR.6
21 October 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

94-81598 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. MUTHAURA (Kenya) said that the world economy continued to reflect sharp contrasts between countries and regions, with the industrialized countries and East Asia showing varying degrees of economic growth, while Africa's economy showed no tangible signs of recovery. Kenya, like many other African countries, had undertaken major structural reforms in order to revitalize economic growth, but its efforts had been frustrated by unfavourable weather conditions, low commodity prices and unpredictable and declining financial resources. The debt burden of countries in the region had been worsened by the persistently low economic growth rates. Initiatives by major donors to reschedule and write off significant portions of their bilateral official debt, though welcome, did not go far enough. Donors must take the bold step of cancelling all remaining debt or else must institute more effective debt reduction measures.

2. The implementation of the Final Act of the Uruguay Round and the activities of the new World Trade Organization should contribute to an open, stable, predictable, equitable and transparent multilateral trading system in which all participants were assured of their proportionate share of world trade; steps should be taken to provide adequate compensation to any which might be parties adversely affected by the new system. Unilateral reintroduction of protectionist measures should be prevented, as such policies restricted the expansion of global trade, harming importing and exporting countries alike.

3. Kenya welcomed the finalization of the International Convention to Combat Desertification and its opening for signature. The afflicted countries were fully aware of their responsibilities in fighting desertification, but their efforts would not bear fruit unless they were supported by the international community. Mobilization of new and additional resources as provided under Agenda 21 remained critical. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was at the centre of the implementation of Agenda 21. As the host country, Kenya urged that any permanent secretariats connected with the environmental conventions, including those on biodiversity, climate change and desertification, should be located in Nairobi. That would be consistent with efforts to strengthen, harmonize and enhance the efficiency of UNEP and other United Nations programmes.

4. Turning to the proposed agenda for development he said that its essence should be the recognition that development was a fundamental human right and that peace and development were intertwined and mutually reinforcing. The agenda must be people-centred: it should give priority to education, training and retraining and the health and welfare of people. It should take into account the fundamental role of science and technology in development, particularly for developing countries. The high priority being accorded to social issues by the international community was extremely encouraging.

5. Mr. OMER (Sudan) said that he was not optimistic about the prospects for a revival of the global economy given that poverty, disease, famine and debt continued to be major problems, particularly in the developing countries, and that the latter were still marginalized even though they had adopted economic reforms. In view of the conflict and tension which those factors provoked, the international community should assume its full responsibilities in that sense; economic growth was the key to progress, while international peace and security could not be achieved in the absence of balanced development. Although greater attention was now being devoted to the world economic situation, there was still cause for concern. The provision of aid to developing countries, for instance, was sometimes conditional upon concepts such as human security, human rights and democracy that were unrelated to development, which depended on the enhancement of human resources, infrastructures and capabilities. Furthermore, the industrial countries had failed to fulfil the commitment made at Rio to provide resources and ensure sustainable development as the basis for conservation of the environment. Debt problems posed an insurmountable obstacle to progress, particularly in Africa and the least developed countries, where export earnings which would otherwise have been spent on health and education, for example, were used to service the debt. Decisive steps should therefore be taken to alleviate that debt burden. Having noted with concern the reduced allocation of resources to the growing number of operational activities so essential to development, he appealed for those resources to be increased.

6. Given the importance of cooperation between the countries of the South, his delegation welcomed the establishment of the Joint Coordinating Committee between the Group of 77 and the Movement of Non-aligned Countries, as well as the signature of the intergovernmental agreement establishing the South Centre as a permanent body. It also hoped to participate in the international conference on South-South cooperation proposed for 1996. Effective steps were needed, however, to ensure that the Uruguay Round agreements and the establishment of the World Trade Organization did not adversely affect the least developed countries. The United Nations should strengthen its role in international economic cooperation and, in that connection he supported the proposal of the Secretary-General to convene an international conference on the financing of development.

7. The Sudan had adopted a national strategy for economic reform based on measures aimed at creating self-reliance. As a result, growth had been achieved and inflation had been reduced. Particular focus had been placed on improving food production in the vital agricultural sector, as well as on the overall development of agriculture and services in the south of the country, where the infrastructure had been damaged as a result of the protracted armed conflict. With a view to better implementing its long-term development plan and establishing a sound economic and productive base, the country had recently adopted a federal state system. It had also affirmed its efforts to ensure that its citizens enjoyed the necessary welfare, stability and security by introducing major reforms, fulfilling the conditions laid down by the major economic and monetary institutions and enacting legislation that would attract investment. Such actions, he hoped would be viewed objectively by the main

donor and industrial countries, as well as by international, financial and economic institutions, and thus enable them to deal positively with the Sudan.

8. In conclusion, he welcomed the imminent signature of the International Convention to Combat Desertification while, at the same time, stressing the need to provide the resources required to implement its provisions.

9. Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia) said that the greatest challenge before the Committee was to create the necessary framework to renew the focus on economic growth and development and the eradication of poverty. Although prospects for the global economy were encouraging, only those economies which had some strength to begin with could benefit from global economic recovery. With the increasing globalization of the world economy, the increased exposure of developing countries to powerful external factors, including stronger market forces, served to marginalize their economies further. The Committee must, therefore, discover how to reverse that situation by seeking to develop an international economic environment, more conducive to development.

10. In his view, the proposed agenda for development should be a political document not a philosophical one. It should identify, mobilize and advocate specific ways and means for achieving the major development objectives and should place a priority on helping the least developed countries to return to the path of sustained growth and participation in the world economy. Its main objective was to promote economic growth and development so that it would constitute a genuine complement to An Agenda for Peace. In that light, the introduction of new non-economic concepts such as human security might not best serve its purposes.

11. There could be no alternative but to engage the developed countries in a constructive dialogue, as called for in General Assembly resolution 48/165, based on the imperatives of mutual interests and benefits, genuine interdependence, and equitably shared responsibilities. Indonesia saw the United Nations as the only universal organization capable of tackling both development and peace and security issues. It saw no merit, however, in the proposal for an economic security council, as that would merely further curtail the democratization process. It would be much more realistic to strengthen existing agencies, funds and programmes by improving efficiency, coordination and coherence in the economic and social fields. In that way, the Economic and Social Council would be enabled to play the role envisioned for it in the Charter. Enhanced coordination with the Bretton Woods institutions was also important to ensure the broadest possible coherence across the entire spectrum of socio-economic decision-making. South-South cooperation was gaining in importance as a necessary corollary to the North-South partnership, and his delegation supported the call by the Group of 77 to convene an international conference on South-South cooperation in 1996.

12. The completion of the Uruguay Round and the agreement to establish the World Trade Organization represented major milestones. While it was too early to assess the merits of the agreements, there was no doubt that unless they were fully implemented, the momentum for stimulating the growth and development of

all countries would be lost. Developing countries facing increased risk resulting from the agreements should be extended technical assistance. The work programme of the World Trade Organization should not be overloaded with social clauses, which would only jeopardize the few remaining comparative advantages of the developing countries. The increasing volume of private financial flows to a growing number of countries was welcome, but might not be sustainable. Moreover, not all countries could successfully tap those resources. His delegation joined the call for the developed countries to uphold their prior commitments to increase official development assistance and reiterated its support for the convening of an international conference on financing for development. Recent efforts to lighten the burden of bilateral debt for developing countries were also welcome, but multilateral debt, which had not yet been addressed, had become a major burden for many debtor countries as well.

13. Considerable progress had been made since the Conference on Environment and Development two years earlier, but the issues of financial resources and technology transfer still posed problems. The concept of the intimate relationship between population, economic growth and sustainable development had been greatly reinforced by the consensus adoption of a programme of action on the subject at the recent International Conference on Population and Development. Together with Agenda 21, it should provide a basis for combating the scourge of poverty.

14. The opportunity existed to return the issues of sustained economic growth, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty to the central focus of the international agenda. Only through a spirit of genuine partnership, however, could the necessary political will and commitment be mobilized to achieve the common objectives of durable peace and prosperity for all.

15. Mr. SHARMA (Nepal) said that an opportunity existed for a global compact between the developed and developing countries, on the basis of the current economic recovery and the conclusion of the Uruguay Round. Given that developing countries currently held approximately 50 per cent of the world's reserves and imported 40 per cent of the goods and services produced by the developed economies, it would seem that the South could no longer be ignored. However, North and South still appeared to be groping for common ground, and the slow pace of development in the wake of the end of the cold war was frustrating. The pace of technological development had brought about rapid changes that called for matching development initiatives. Changes in development perspectives also seemed to have lost direction; unless key resolutions and programmes of actions resulting from conferences and summits were implemented, they would have no impact on the well-being of the people of the world, which was the best measure of the state of global development. Despite three decades of implementation of the International Development Strategy and other initiatives, poverty had not decreased; in fact, it had increased significantly.

16. The least developed countries had tried their best to cope with the new demands placed on them by the international financial institutions. Most, including Nepal, had instituted structural adjustment programmes and economic liberalization policies designed for long-term sustainable growth and

development, but at an enormous short-term cost. There seemed to be general consensus on the need to provide special attention to the least developed countries through the primary mechanism of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. However, progress in its implementation had been disappointing, owing to the existence of a structural problem which must be corrected. The proposed agenda for development should help in that area. He stressed that it should recognize that developing countries were at different stages of development and should refrain from prescribing one formula for all. It should pay particular attention to the special problems of land-locked developing countries, as they represented nearly half of the least developed countries.

17. Mr. GORITA (Romania) said that the end of the cold war and of the ideological confrontation between East and West had permitted a new approach to the world's economic and social problems; development was currently one of the world's main concerns. Reviewing the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, he said that it was important to achieve a balance between different countries or regions in implementing Agenda 21. While his delegation welcomed the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, it wished to point out that only the widest possible representation and participation of States in the World Trade Organization would ensure a successful launching of that body's work.

18. The forthcoming international conferences - the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women - would complete the programmes of action aimed at the promotion of global sustainable human development. In the next few decades, Governments and United Nations alike would face the daunting challenge of implementing the various programmes of action relating to social development.

19. Concerning the agenda for development, he welcomed the fact that it approached development as a common problem and responsibility of all countries. National efforts were essential but must be supported by a favourable international environment. The United Nations should play an increasing role in that connection.

20. Despite signs of slight economic recovery in several countries with economies in transition, the economic situation of those countries taken as a whole remained difficult. The economic reforms, industrial restructuring and privatization efforts which those countries had been pursuing for the past four years deserved further attention and support from the international community.

21. Mr. TALPUR (Pakistan) said that the widening inequity among and within nations threatened the global economy, world ecology and the international political order. In that connection, the international community must, on the threshold of a new millennium, assess its rationale for collective and individual efforts for economic and social development.

22. As the experience of the previous world recession had shown, stimulating the economic potential of the developing countries could provide the impetus for

world economic growth. Since everyone currently subscribed to the principles of free markets and open economies, it was possible for the first time in history to create a genuinely global economy. However, if the protectionist tendencies evident in some developed countries were allowed to triumph, world economic growth could be held back and kept at a snail's pace. Those tendencies could neutralize the gains for world trade and economic growth expected from the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. A fair and open trading system could provide a powerful stimulus to global economic growth. In that connection, the agreements concerning the liberalization of textile trade through the progressive phasing out of the Multifibre Arrangement must be implemented, and the ability of smaller countries to resist unilateral and discriminatory trade measures must also be strengthened. There was a compelling argument for preferential treatment for the most disadvantaged States during the transitional period.

23. Poverty was wrecking the present world order. The list of countries which were threatened with internal political chaos because they could no longer provide sustenance and hope to their peoples was growing longer each year. Rather than striving in vain to isolate themselves from the spreading poverty, the affluent countries would do better to help the developing countries break the bonds of poverty by providing them with the appropriate resources and access to markets and technology. In that regard, sustainable development must be promoted with emphasis on balanced socio-economic development, human development and poverty alleviation. While effective domestic policies were important, a supportive international economic environment was crucial for developing countries to successfully eradicate poverty.

24. Since 1988, his Government, convinced that it bore the basic responsibility for engineering a change in the living conditions of its population, had introduced a number of reforms aimed at privatizing and deregulating the economy and creating a market-friendly environment. With a view to self-sustained growth that would ensure that the benefits of development trickled down to the entire population, the Government had stressed the importance of a well-developed energy sector and had, in that connection, recently concluded agreements with the United States and Hong Kong to invest in the country's energy sector. The centre-piece of Pakistan's policy was human-focused development through the social action programme aimed at improving the socio-economic condition of disadvantaged groups. He appealed to the international community for support in carrying out that Programme.

25. Mr. BOUCHER (World Bank) said that over the past 50 years, despite mistakes and disappointments, the Bank had posted substantial achievements in the developing countries. Indeed, life expectancy had increased by 50 per cent, infant mortality had been reduced by two thirds, average per capita income had more than doubled and literacy had increased substantially. However, progress had been uneven, and the challenge ahead was daunting, particularly in Africa. However, with African resolve and adequate and sustained international support, the discouraging trends in Africa, too, could be reversed.

26. The development context in which the Bank's assistance activities were currently carried out was vastly different from that of 1944, when the Bretton Woods institutions had been established, and was different even from that of 1984. Developing countries had become increasingly linked to the international economy, human development had moved to the centre of national policy, greater reliance on the private sector as the engine of growth was now a pillar of national policy in many developing countries and good governance had become a growing imperative. The challenge of global change was also underlined by the unique problems of specific groups of countries. Thus, in sub-Saharan Africa, most countries had been mired in lacklustre or declining rates of growth for over a decade. In Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the problems associated with economic transition had proved to be extremely complex. The Bank must adapt to that changed development context. It had already taken a number of major organizational and technical measures and envisaged other measures to increase its accountability and openness.

27. The Bank's track record, while not unblemished, was relatively strong especially when viewed in terms of a portfolio of over 6,000 operations in some 140 countries. It intended in future to focus its action on five main areas: economic reforms, investing in people, protecting the environment, stimulating the private sector and reorienting government. In pursuing those objectives, the Bank would identify country-level activities in which it could maximize its own impact; strengthen its alliances with Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector; strengthen client participation in the design and implementation of Bank-supported programmes; focus on programme quality, rather than volume of lending; streamline its bureaucracy; and maintain its high standing in financial markets.

28. Mr. AMMARIN (Jordan) said that South-South cooperation was a prerequisite and a means of moving towards North-South dialogue and cooperation. In that regard, the South Centre must become the catalyst for change and the initiator of dialogue to address disputes and differences. The recent development in the Middle East peace process, especially between Jordan and Israel, represented a major step towards regional cooperation in an area that had been adversely affected by many years of wars and conflicts. The Jordan-Israel agenda covered such common issues as water, energy, environment and trade.

29. His country fully endorsed the five dimensions of development outlined in the Secretary-General's report on an agenda for development (A/48/935). A bridging mechanism was needed in the agenda to compensate countries which incurred high costs in the short term as they strove to reach sustainable development in the long term. Their performance should be evaluated with objective evaluation criteria, including indicators relating to human rights, human development, adjustment and restructuring efforts and environmental programmes. The agenda for development also should devise a plan to alleviate debt overhang and place a ceiling on debt repayment, by scheduling debt on reasonable terms, writing off some debt and enhancing official development assistance.

30. A financial package also was needed to finance multinational projects designed to enhance regional peace and cooperation. An international incentive system should be formulated to help countries overcome the severe pressures involved in opening their economies, pursuing free trade and establishing a dynamic role for the private sector. In conclusion, he said that North-South cooperation was crucial for development, which in turn was the basic requirement for global peace and security and a sustainable future for mankind.

31. Mr. KEBEDE (Ethiopia) said that the promise of global peace and security would be fulfilled only if the international community found a lasting solution to the problems of poverty, particularly in the developing countries. His Government had introduced courageous and far-reaching socio-economic reforms, as well as a long-term development strategy focusing on agriculture that established a structural link between various sectors and provided the basis for structural transformation and self-sufficiency.

32. Such national efforts should be supported by appropriate external assistance fostering sustainable growth and development, including adequate levels of concessional financing and technical support for infrastructure and national capacity-building on a continuous, predictable and assured basis.

33. The major global conferences scheduled for 1995 should devote priority attention to the problem of poverty. The World Summit for Social Development should focus on socio-economic development challenges, the adoption of a global strategy for poverty eradication, the generation of productive employment and the enhancement of social integration. At the Fourth World Conference on Women, the need to integrate women more effectively in the development process should be emphasized and action-oriented programmes should be adopted. Similarly, his delegation hoped that the mid-term global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s would result in practical action to correct initial failures and develop strategies to expedite the implementation of the Programme in the coming five years. His country welcomed the strong relationship between population and sustained economic development reflected in the Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development and urged the international community to lend solid support to the Programme of Action.

34. Inasmuch as Africa was expected initially to lose, rather than gain, from the agreements reached at the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, it was important to monitor their implementation continuously to ensure that all countries benefited from the expansion of world trade, and to improve market access for and ensure adequate protection of the interests of the least developed countries in particular, inter alia, through enhanced trade preferences and prompt compensation.

35. His delegation fully endorsed the conclusions on environment and development reached at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It also attached paramount importance to the International Convention to Combat Desertification, and urged all developed countries and financial institutions fully to support the Convention's implementation.

36. The conclusions and recommendations of the proposed agenda for development were universally acceptable; however, the mechanisms and instruments for its implementation required further elaboration to ensure that they were clear and transparent. In conclusion, he emphasized that the survival of developed and developing countries alike required that solutions be found to the problems of poverty, hunger and development.

37. Mr. AGONA (Uganda) said that the economic situation in Africa remained critical and that the international community must rededicate itself to pursuing policies to enable Africa to play its proper role in the world economy. In particular, the international community's global policy towards Africa should take into account the fact that the potential for African recovery had been significantly improved in recent years with the adoption of structural adjustment programmes and democratization.

38. He underscored the need for additional diversification funds for Africa under the aegis of an existing funding organization such as the African Development Bank. National diversification councils were essential in order to build national capacity and involve local communities from the outset. Industry must play a key role in the diversification of African economies, and additional emphasis should be placed on the industrial processing of African commodities. The international community must demonstrate a firm commitment to an incremental approach with a clear target in mind, along the lines proposed by the African Development Bank. The improved domestic policy environment in most African countries argued against delaying action on a diversification fund for Africa's commodities.

39. The alarming level of external indebtedness remained a major impediment to the development of the least developed countries, and he cited statistics pertaining to his own country to underscore that point. His delegation fully supported the recommendation on debt made in August 1994 by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which called for a dialogue between debtor and creditor countries, especially in addressing the concerns of the most heavily indebted poor countries, and welcomed the recent British policy statement on the question.

40. In the light of the anticipated negative impact by some countries of the new multilateral trade regime arising out of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, it was essential to establish a unit for the least developed countries within the Secretariat of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)/World Trade Organization to routinely monitor any adverse effects and recommend appropriate remedial measures.

41. His delegation welcomed the many significant conferences, summits and meetings which had facilitated a holistic review of global problems and provided solutions underscoring the universality of contemporary concerns. It also believed that the agenda for development should go beyond intellectualizations to chart strategies that were capable of implementation and were designed to achieve common development aspirations as set out in various globally binding instruments. The agenda should elicit the political commitment of the North to

act on global concerns. The efforts under way to restructure and revitalize the United Nations must go beyond mere cosmetic reform so as to yield a more effective and efficient system capable of carrying out the Organization's mandate in the social, political, economic and related fields.

42. Mr. CHO (Republic of Korea) said that despite signs of recovery in the world economy, the outlook in some countries in transition might not be so encouraging and economic conditions in many parts of Africa remained difficult. Structural reforms were rightly viewed as key factors for global economic recovery. Increased attention should also be focused on the role of economic policy in ensuring strong and durable expansion with low levels of unemployment and inflation in the long run.

43. Although the gains from the Uruguay Round were expected to be substantial, they would most likely be unevenly distributed among countries, and sub-Saharan African nations and the least developed countries were likely to benefit the least. The secretariats of GATT and of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development should further study how to help those countries gain more benefits from the Uruguay Round. The agreement establishing the World Trade Organization would foster a more predictable and rule-based global trading environment: it must be implemented faithfully in a spirit of multilateralism and to avoid the development of exclusive regional blocs.

44. Despite the progress they had made during the past 50 years the developing countries still confronted daunting challenges. Moreover, the proliferation of regional conflicts underscored the fact that strife, whether ethnic or religious, was a symptom of socio-economic instability resulting from poverty, disease, unemployment and inadequate education. Development must be a top priority on the global agenda, for development and peace went hand in hand.

45. It was therefore appropriate that the agenda for development had attracted the close attention of the international community, and his delegation looked forward to action-oriented recommendations and a substantive discussion of the views on the agenda expressed at the World Hearings on Development and the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 1994. His delegation supported the expansion in the agenda of the concept of economic development to encompass gender, education, health and the environment. While individual countries had the primary responsibility for development, they required the support of the international community. The United Nations had the necessary authority and legitimacy to cope with the momentous issues of peace and development. Africa should be accorded special consideration in the agenda for development.

46. The adoption of Agenda 21 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was a major step towards the achievement of sustainable development. His delegation welcomed the efforts made by Governments, international organizations and the private sector to implement the commitments made at Rio de Janeiro and considered the successful conclusion of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the adoption of the International Convention to Combat Desertification to be

encouraging examples of the international community's determination to make positive changes for mankind's future. However, the global community should step up its efforts to facilitate the implementation of those commitments for the benefit of future generations. He hoped that the ongoing negotiations on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change would result in full agreement on all crucial issues in 1995; he also hoped that as many countries as possible would sign the Convention to Combat Desertification and ensure its prompt entry into force.

47. Lastly, his delegation supported the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development, considered follow-up to the Conference to be essential for its implementation and welcomed the fact that the United Nations Population Fund had already taken various initiatives to that end.

48. Mr. NOVRUZOV (Azerbaijan) said that Azerbaijan's painful transition to a market economy had been complicated by the need to resist foreign armed aggression, which had led to the occupation of more than 20 per cent of its territory and displaced over 1 million people. As a result of the hostilities, 30 per cent of agricultural lands had been rendered unusable; that had further worsened Azerbaijan's critical food situation. In the light of that situation, Azerbaijan's further expansion of its cooperation in the social and economic fields with the United Nations and regional economic associations was essential for the success of its reforms and its achievement of genuine independence.

49. Azerbaijan was an active member of the Economic Cooperation Organization and the Organization for Black Sea Cooperation. It had consistently expressed its support for the intensification of the economic union of the countries members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The leaders of Azerbaijan were convinced that international cooperation in any regional economic association should be based on the principles of equality, mutual advantage and non-interference in internal affairs.

50. Azerbaijan had participated in the preparations for and conduct of a number of global forums held under United Nations auspices. A governmental delegation headed by President Heydar Aliyev had participated in the International Conference on Population and Development, and representatives of Azerbaijan were involved in preparations for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), which would be held in Istanbul in 1996. Azerbaijan also attached great importance to the success of the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in 1995.

51. In 1994, the World Bank had approved the first loans for a number of projects in Azerbaijan, including a major project to improve the water supply of Baku. At the same time, the World Bank and, in particular, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) still seemed hesitant to provide more decisive support for Azerbaijan's efforts to stabilize its economic situation. Often, in granting credits to the newly independent States of the former Soviet Union, the Bretton Woods institutions applied a double standard. In particular, IMF had not granted Azerbaijan credits to stabilize its national currency, while it had

responded positively to requests from practically all the countries of the former Soviet Union, including Armenia.

52. The environmental situation in Azerbaijan was a source of great concern. Decades of rapacious exploitation of Azerbaijan's natural resources - the most important of which was oil - had led to the severe environmental degradation of many districts of the Republic. Of all European capitals, Baku had the highest level of air pollution. For that reason, Azerbaijan took great interest in the activities of United Nations bodies and agencies that dealt with problems of the environment and sustainable development. Azerbaijan had welcomed the decisions of the Rio Conference and had wholeheartedly supported the establishment and programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development. His delegation hoped that the Global Environment Facility would help alleviate Azerbaijan's environmental problems, which affected the entire planet.

53. There was no need for antagonism between countries with economies in transition and the Group of 77. Both groups had the same interest in the speedy restoration of sustainable global economic growth. The guarantee of the right to development was the most important condition for strengthening the international positions of both the developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Both groups of countries were in favour of the liberalization of trade and access to world commodity markets and the complete lifting of restrictions on the free movement of goods, capital and labour. His delegation did not share the view that international efforts to restructure the economies of countries in transition could be detrimental to the existing programmes of aid and development assistance to the developing countries. There had so far been no indication of a redistribution of aid flows from the developed countries and international organizations in favour of the countries in transition. Moreover, the prompt economic recovery of Eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union would have a positive effect on the economies of many developing countries.

54. Mr. LAMPTEY (Ghana) said that the international community must address global development issues with the same vigour with which it approached issues relating to global peace and security. Priority attention must be given to the pressing economic problems facing the developing countries. Further attention to the issues of commodities, debt and the transfer of resources was essential. Although the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations offered great promise for trade liberalization and long-term growth, the agreements reached appeared to have eroded the position of the developing countries, most notably those in Africa, by strengthening major trading blocs and nations. Having little or no industrial base from which to compete internationally, and dependent as it was on primary commodities for most of its income, Africa would be worse off. Even if African exports grew in volume, they were unlikely to increase much in value.

55. The external debt of the developing countries, especially those in Africa, continued to hamper their economic growth. Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for almost 12 per cent of the world's total debt. The international community should respond positively to alleviate that burden, which continued to prevent

sub-Saharan African countries from making meaningful progress in their development objectives.

56. Although a few developing countries had made important economic strides, low-income African developing countries had experienced little change in the decade-long trend of declining output per capita income. Thus far the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s had had little effect on most African economies, and the international community had yet to agree on the substance of the new modalities for creating a diversification fund for Africa'. commodities. In the light of that deteriorating economic situation and the lack of any meaningful progress in the solution of global economic problems, his delegation had supported the initiative to prepare an agenda for development and promote an international consensus in the field of development.

57. The agenda for development should deal with the underlying problems that continued to affect a large part of the world's population and posed a threat to international peace and security, and it should contain proposals and recommendations on the practical solution of those problems. It was essential to coordinate relevant policies in the field of global macroeconomic manag ment and establish a new regime to guide trade, aid flows, environment, population and debt. It should be a blueprint for action to eradicate poverty and eliminate global economic inequalities with a view to maintaining international peace and security. A new vision of inter-State relations that would overcome new sources of tension and the sharp disparities in the global economy was essential for the promotion and advancement of all peoples. In laying the foundations for a better quality of life for all, the United Nations should elaborate a framework for development cooperation based on shared responsibility and a commitment to promote the balanced growth of the world economy.

58. Developing countries had repeatedly reaffirmed their primary responsibility for their economic development, and many of them had undertaken reform and restructuring measures to facilitate their integration into the world economy. Growing international dialogue and cooperation, coupled with the expansion of technology, were bringing them closer to the realization of their development objectives.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.